

The front elevation of the Church, Dundalk

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

MICHAEL WYNNE

From its prominent position it commands a view of Slieve Gullion to the North and the full range of the Ravensdale hills to the East. The church is built on a grassy rise whose granite boundary walls are constructed in Kentish Rag. The form of the building is determined by the elliptical plan of the body of the church; at one end of the shorter axis of the ellipse a smaller ellipse forms the sanctuary and rises well above the nave in a sixty-foot tower. At the opposite end of the same axis there is a circular addition, constructed to form the entrance-baptistry. This is flanked by two side wings, placed concentrically on the broad side of the main ellipse, and containing sacristies, confessionals and side chapels. The wings and the baptistry are united by an ambulatory which also follows the line of the nave.

The entire concrete shell of the church is sheathed with sawn granite slabs of regular rectangular shape, which give a unity of finish only broken by the large windows, glazed with concrete and glass in the French-originated technique of dalles-de-verre. The roofs of the tower, nave, and shallow baptistry dome are covered with copper laid in long radial strips. The top of the

tower is decorated with an open-work sculpture of the Crucifixion with Our Lady and St. John, designed and made by Osin Kelly. Imogen Stuart is the author of the stations of the cross which bring relief to the ambulatory wall. The life-sized linear treatment of the scenes of the Passion is suitable for a public celebration of the Way of the Cross, but aesthetically also they have the purpose of drawing down the eye to entrance level.

The two main doors of the church are covered with copper sheeting lettered by Frank Morris with translations of Early Christian Prayers inspired by the two fundamental Christian doctrines of Baptism and the Eucharist. The existence of two main doors is related to the hymn of Paulinus of Nola (d.431) which appears on one of the doors:

This temple has two porches, as the Church has two testaments: but the temple and the Church are each blessed with one fount. The old law gives strength to the new. the new completes the old; in the old was hope, in the new is faith. But old and new are joined by the grace of Christ

which is why a fountain has been put in the space between.

The fact that the two doors of the church lead into the baptistry is also echoed in Paulinus' beautiful hymn. The font is a large granite monolith sculptured by Michael Biggs. Over it is a shallow lantern and dome decorated with stained glass and mosaic by Gabriel Loire. From the baptistry one's gaze already wanders through the inner glass partition to the sanctuary with its massive altar, the stone of sacrifice and table of communion, for which one prepares by the sacrament of Baptism. Gaining admission to the body of the church through the baptistry is calculated to remind the entrant that only through Baptism does one become a member of the Church — the Mystical Body of Christ.

Through two doors in the glass partition, one arrives in the great place of assembly of the people of the parish, with the sanctuary clearly becoming the focus of all attention. One has an uninterrupted view of the altar from every position in the church.

The nave is floored with rectangular pieces of South African quartzite, basically a pale

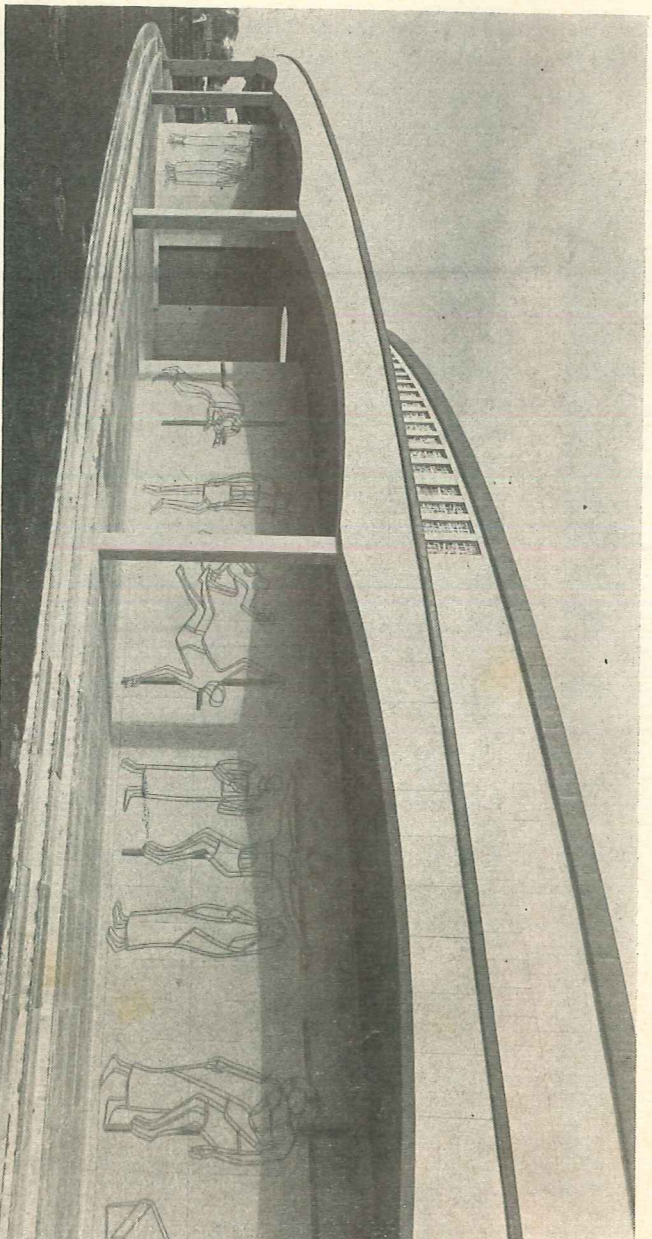
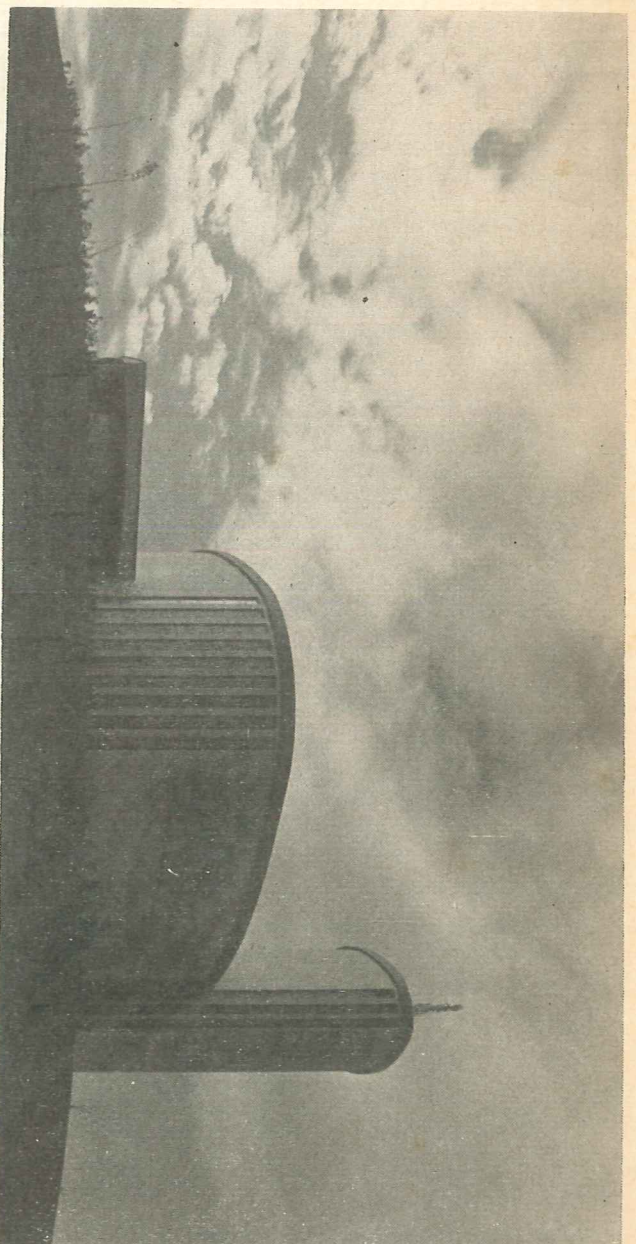
grey stone, but showing a variety of tones of brown because of the presence of limonite, or iron hydroxide. Under the floor is the electrical heating mesh. The seats are made of afromosa, while the ceiling is finished with broad slats of parana pine separated to reveal the black hesian backing. The subdued tones of floor, seating, ceiling and stipple-finished walls provide a restrained foil to the three large windows, all made in his studios to the design of Gabriel Loire of Chartres.

The three windows are strictly related to each other in one great abstract symphony of colour. The concrete support of the dalles-de-verre technique and strong mullions give stability and counter-point to the rich colour. One notes how the artist has designed the windows to allow for the variety of light throughout the day, the East window has more yellow, orange and red than the South window, while the West window is practically devoid of warm tones, because the glow of the setting sun will compensate for their absence. Blue glass in many shades is the basic unifying colour.

Because of their positions, these windows do not distract attention from the sanctuary. Instead

they lend a rich mystical light to the whole interior. The sanctuary itself is lit by two long narrow windows by the same artist which rise to the height of the tower. The altar, tabernacle, reredos and ambo were designed by Ray Carroll, working to a brief which required him to place the tabernacle in the back wall of the sanctuary, directly behind the altar. The desired dignity of the place of reservation of the Blessed Eucharist is achieved by surrounding the door of the tabernacle with a band of enamel decoration, placed in a granite setting, which itself is the centre of a large decorative reredos. The reredos is lightly carved to portray the Twelve Apostles, not so much as a realistic picture of the Last Supper as a theme for a slightly richer texture behind the altar. A semi-circular gallery which projects into the church on the short axis is to carry the console for a full pipe organ with the pipes arranged symmetrically on the adjacent flanking walls.

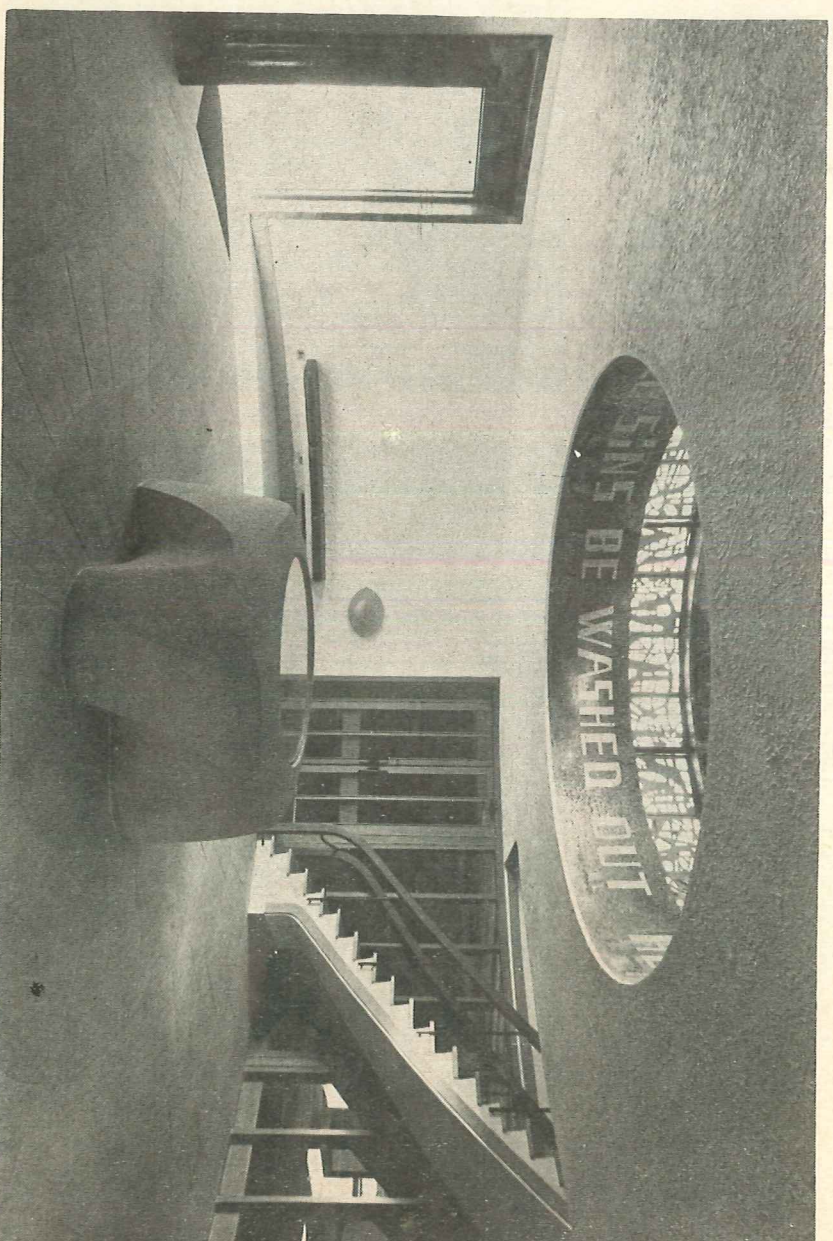
The aim of the architects is to create a shelter for prayerful assembly, where all the faithful would have a sense of community among themselves and with their priest, celebrating the Eucharist in a dignified setting. In particular, the fact that the priest passes through the congregation on his way to the Altar is a reminder of the participation which should prevail between priest and people in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, in accordance with the words of St. Paul. "Every priest has been taken from mankind, and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and Sacrifices for sin" (Ep. Heb. v. 1). Many artists collaborated in this goal, working in close sympathy with the architects to achieve a worthy, tranquil and pleasing place of communion with Christ.



Top right: A side view of the church.

Centre: Detail of the front of the church showing Stations of the Cross by Imogen Stuart.

Right: A view of the baptistery with font by Michael and Frances Biggs and dome over it with mosaics by Gabriel Loire. The floor is in sawn granite from the same quarry at Ballynockin as the font.



**CHURCH OF THE DEDEMER,
ARD EASMUINN, DUNDALK**

**Architects: Frank Corr and
Donagh Madden, Derry**

Builder: Con Creodon, Dublin

The Church of the Redeemer was built to accommodate a congregation of eleven hundred in a rapidly developing suburb of Dundalk.

The form of the church is determined by the elliptical plan of the nave with a smaller ellipse projecting from the centre of one of the long walls to form the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is carried up to form the tower 60' high.

The entrance to the church is through the baptistry on the centre of the opposite wall and the remaining accommodation is arranged symmetrically on either side of this.

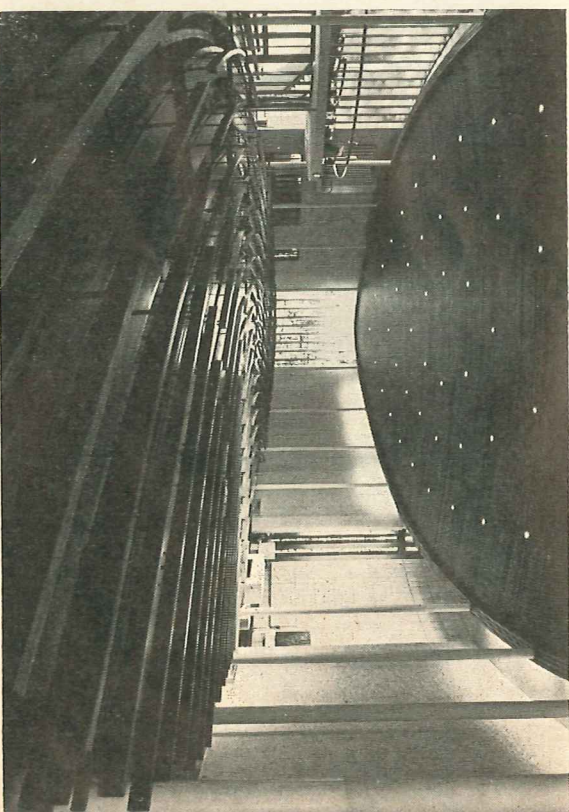
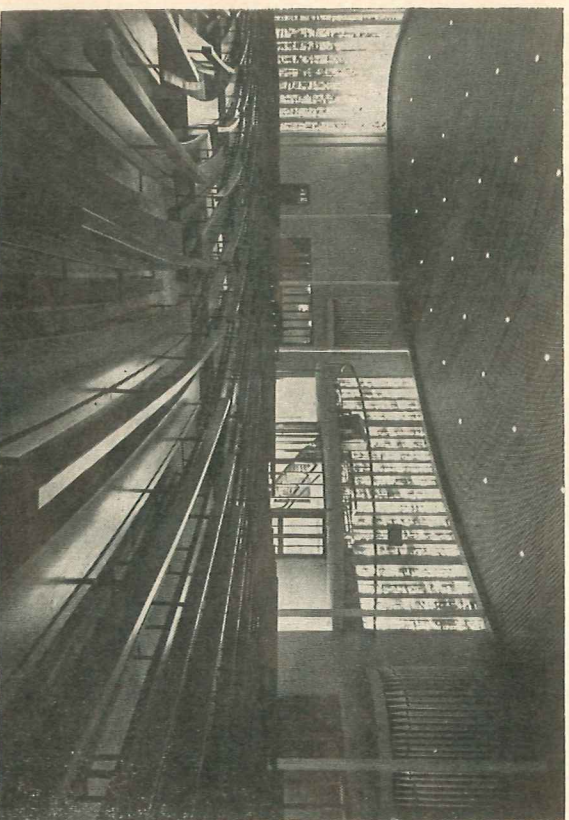
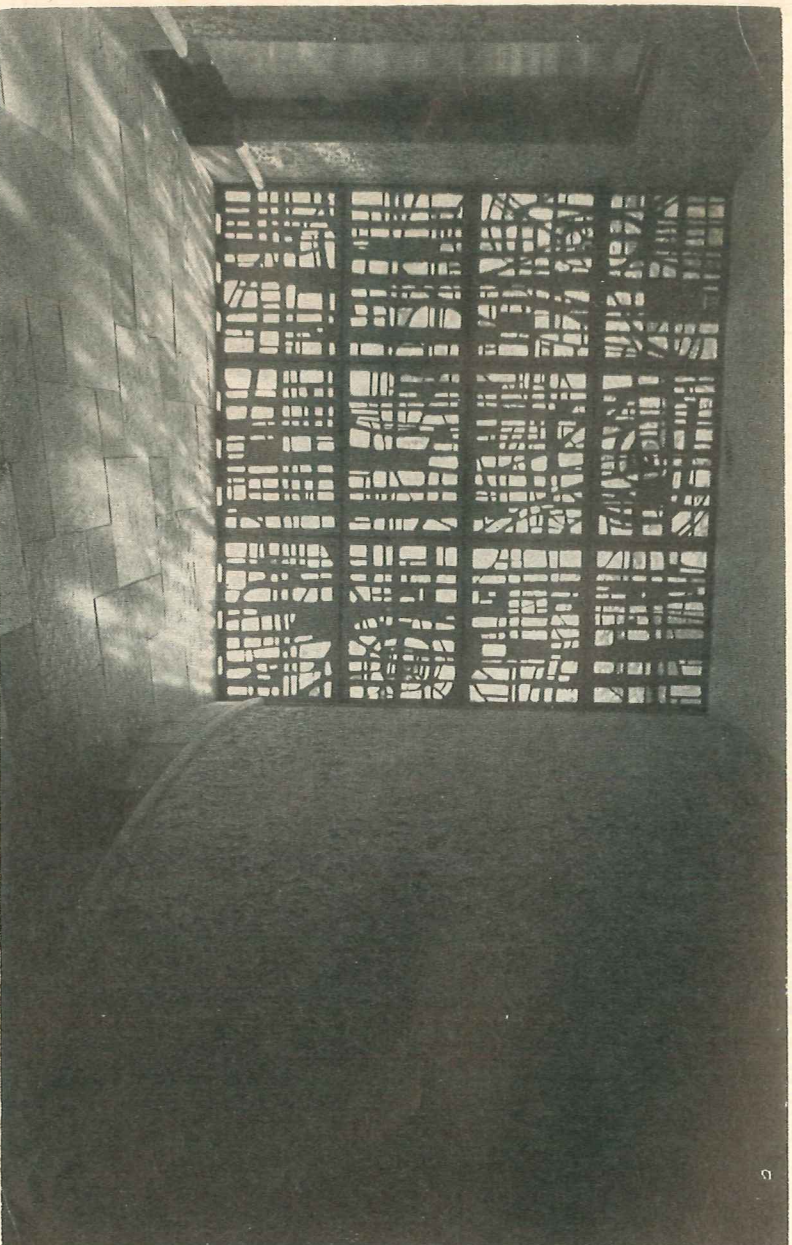
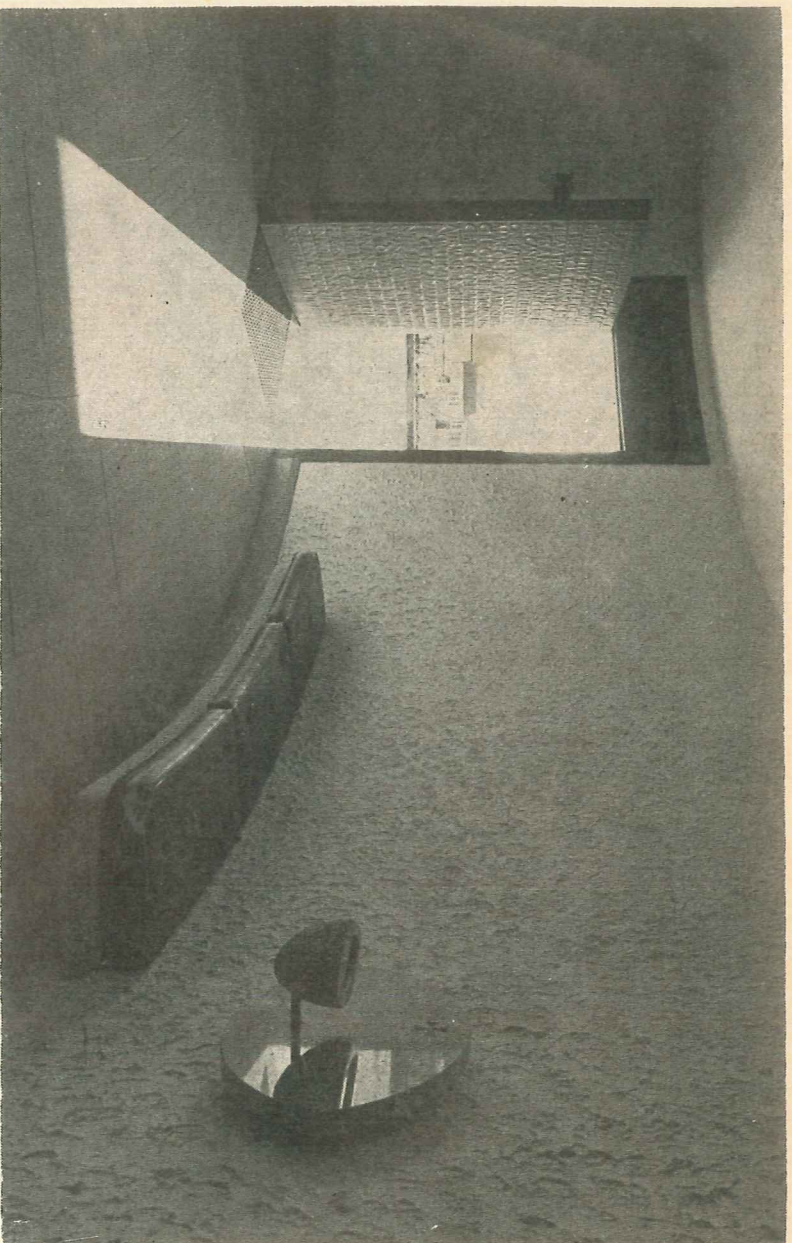
The walls of the church are in reinforced concrete and the roof of the nave is constructed with a system of steel frames.

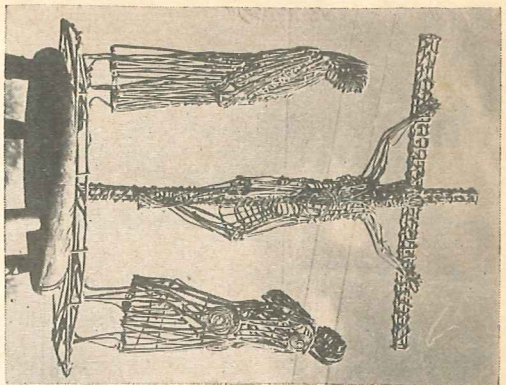
Externally the walls of the church are clad with 2" sawn granite slabs. Roofs are copper covered. The ramped floor of the church is covered with riven quartzite.

The Church of the Redeemer was built for Very Rev. D. Campbell Adm., Dundalk. The contract price was £174,000.

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Mrs. I. Stuart, 2 Otranto Place, Sandycove, Dublin, Station of the Cross. Ray Carroll, Esq., Inishquin, Glencullen, Co. Dublin, Sanctuary. Oisín Kelly, Esq., Prospect, Templeogue, Co. Dublin, Calvary Group. Monsieur and Madam Gabriel Loire, 10 Rue Chantault, Chartres, France,





Opposite page:

Top: detail of the baptistry showing one pair of curved entrance doors covered with copper lettering by Frank Morris.

Centre: detail of window in dalles-de-verre by Gabriel Loire.

Bottom left: apart from the sanctuary all other elements in the plan were combined with the front entrance.

Bottom right: general view of the interior showing the seating curved to the shape of the church and with a ramped floor.

This page:
Above: small scale model of Calvary group by Oisín Kelly.

Right: one of the entrance doors being inspected by the sculptor Frank Morris with Michael Biggs.

Below: a view of the church nearing completion with planting already established.

Below right: the sanctuary. The rear wall 60' high is clad with 2" sawn and punched granite. The carving of the twelve apostles and the Crucifix are by Ray Carroll as are the altar, ambo and chair. The umbry in enamel and bronze is also by Ray Carroll.

